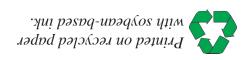
Affordable Health Care for All Americans

Congressman Guidenecht inmoduces prescription drug

First District, Minnesota

March 2005

March



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CONGRESSMAN GIL GUTKNECHT U.S. HOUSE OF THE UNITED STATES U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WASHINGTON, DC 20515



"Affordable health care affects everyone. Market forces can help to slow the rapidly increasing costs. Americans deserve world-class health care at world market prices."

-Congressman Gil Gutknecht



Top photo: Congressman Gutknecht talks with Sleepy Eye residents after presenting a USDA check to the hospital.

Bottom photo: Congressman Gutknecht conducts a press conference on prescription drug importation at the U.S. Capitol.



LOWERING HEALTH CARE COSTS

Dear Friend,

Many Americans are struggling to make ends meet as they battle personal health issues.

Others are looking for ways to afford much-needed health care for a parent or a child. The rising costs of health care concern all of us.

When I first started working to lower health care costs by opening pharmaceutical markets and expanding health savings accounts, I didn't have a lot of company. My colleagues, after learning more about these important issues, are joining me to pass meaningful legislation.

I hope you'll review the enclosed information about these two cost-savings measures. Both utilize market forces. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

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weekly update via e-mail.

Also, check out station times and information for Gil's radio shows, featuring your chance to call in with questions.

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Left photo: Congressman Gutknecht testifies before the National Governors' Association about the high cost of prescription drugs.

Right photo: Congressman Gutknecht listens to seniors' concerns at the Truman Nursing Home.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG MARKET ACCESS

The Problem

According to the Congressional Budget

Office, American seniors will spend \$1.8

trillion dollars on prescription drugs over
the next ten years. Americans often pay three,
four, five...even ten times as much for the
same prescription drugs than our friends in
Canada and Europe. American taxpayers
subsidize the pharmaceutical industry in
two ways: through the research we fund
and through our tax code. Why is it that
American consumers are held captive
in a market that forces them to pay
significantly more for the products they
help develop? According to the
Congressional Research Service, no other

product has the same protections on

importation – not even heavily regulated

industries such as chemicals and munitions.

The Solution

I have again introduced a bill (H.R. 328) to open the market on prescription drugs. It allows pharmacists, wholesalers and individuals to import FDA-approved prescription drugs manufactured in FDA-approved facilities. The good news is there is growing momentum in the U.S. Senate with the introduction of companion legislation (S. 109). We have never been closer to passing meaningful, market access legislation in both bodies.

Myths and Facts

Myth #1: Rogue businesses will be allowed to export drugs to the U.S. with no way to verify if the drugs being exported are FDA-approved.

FACT: All exporters must register and make facilities subject to inspection. Part of this registration agreement is to export only qualifying drugs to authorized importers. The HHS Secretary has the right to refuse registration. Exporters must notify the Secretary of any recalls or changes in registration information.

"This is a new day in the debate over affordable pharmaceuticals. We have joined forces with members of the Senate to say that this is an idea whose time has come."

-Congressman Gil Gutknecht

Prices effective February 7, 2005

This prescription drug cost

comparison shows Americans

than our friends in Germany.

pay 128% more for these drugs

Metropolitan Pharmacy, <i>Frankfurt, Germany</i>		Local Pharmacy Rochester, Minnesota
\$35.72	Celexa	\$85.46
\$60.25	Nexium	\$145.33
\$19.31 ←	Norvasc	\$54.83
\$34.33	Zyrtec	\$73.02
\$35.22 <	Prevacid	\$146.47
\$23.83 <	Zocor	\$85.39
\$50.62	Actos	\$116.64
\$54.98 <	Zoloft	\$89.44
\$102.67	Imitrex	\$166.40
\$38.64	Clarinex	\$77.06
TOTAL=\$455.57		TOTAL=\$1,040.04

Safety Provisions

The pharmaceutical industry tells
American consumers that importing
prescription drugs isn't safe. They have few
facts to support this. In truth, my bill makes
the importation of prescription drugs safer
for American consumers. The lanugage
requires tamper-resistant packaging and
chain of custody protection for any
imported prescription drug marketed
in the United States.

Myth #2: Under this bill, consumers can import drugs from any country in the world, even those without safe pharmaceutical systems.

FACT: The bill specifically states that only drugs from permitted countries and FDA-inspected facilities are covered.

Myth #3: Rogue internet pharmacies will send unapproved drugs into the U.S. and consumers will be unable to determine which sites are registered.

FACT: All personal importation will require a written prescription and only registered exporters may participate. The FDA will post on their website and through a toll-free number a list of registered exporters.

HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

What are Health Savings Accounts?

In 2003, President Bush signed legislation creating Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). HSAs give workers the opportunity to save tax-free for routine expenses. This combines the security of insurance against major illness with the freedom of knowing you can take your account with you when you change jobs. These accounts can reduce health insurance costs for families by thousands of dollars annually while giving them more control over their own health care expenses.

Medicare Law

During the Medicare debate in 2003, I urged both the White House and congressional leaders to include HSAs as part of the overall bill. HSAs became law, giving millions of Americans tax-free choice and ownership advantages concerning their health care.

HSAs in the 109th Congress

Over the last six months, I have advocated expanding HSAs to more individuals, especially retirees. I am pleased by the support of my colleagues in Congress and the President. He recognized the need to expand personal health savings accounts in his State of the Union address. Lowering health care costs is critical. I will continue to work with my colleagues to expand the availability of HSAs to more Americans.



Top photo: Congressman Gutknecht visits with Minneapolis Firefighters about the implementation of HSAs.

Left photo: Congressman Gutknecht works to defeat amendments aimed at limiting HSAs, as noted in Health Care News (December 2004).